

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Preston House (Preferred)

Destroyed c. 1978

AND/OR COMMON

Palmer House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 1 mile east of Smyth/Washington County line; .3 mile west of State Route 107; 1.8 miles northwest of intersection of State Routes 107 and 610.

CITY, TOWN

Saltville

VICINITY OF

Ninth (William C. Wampler)

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY

Smyth

CODE

173

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

☐ DISTRICT

☐ PUBLIC

☐ OCCUPIED

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ MUSEUM

☒ BUILDING(S)

☒ PRIVATE

☒ UNOCCUPIED

☐ COMMERCIAL

☐ PARK

☐ STRUCTURE

☐ BOTH

☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

☐ EDUCATIONAL

☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ OBJECT

☒ IN PROCESS

☐ YES, RESTRICTED

☐ GOVERNMENT

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

☐ YES UNRESTRICTED

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☒ NO

☐ MILITARY

☒ OTHER none

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. James A. Hatfield

STREET & NUMBER

Box 789

CITY, TOWN

Saltville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 24370

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Smyth County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Marion

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE

1972; 1976

FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL ☐

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☒ FAIR

☒ DETEIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED

DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Preston House is a large, rambling building situated on a knoll overlooking the town of Saltville in Smyth County. The dismantling of the house had begun in January, 1976, when investigation of its history and significance was undertaken by local citizens. The upper stories of the house's later wings had been removed, along with all of the original sash and most of the woodwork in the oldest portions of the house. Arrangements to preserve the building were subsequently made, and the removed woodwork will be returned to its former location. At the time of the architectural examination, however, the woodwork was in storage and unavailable for inspection.

The Preston House is a two-story, gable-roofed, double-pile frame structure covered with beaded weatherboards. It incorporates a central, two-story, five-bay "I-house" built in two stages and having exterior end chimneys constructed of limestone. Flanking this section are lower, two-story, three-bay wings which, like the main block, are one-room deep and which were built during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. At the east end of the house, an early one-story structure, originally freestanding, was attached to the main house by the construction of the wings. A nineteenth-century print entitled "Preston Home, 1860," shows the house in this form, with a one-story porch extending across the front of the main block and its wings. A door in the central bay of the second floor led onto the roof of the central portion of the porch.

Early in the twentieth century, an enclosed porch chamber covering the three central bays of the second-story facade was built. At the same time, the one-story east room was raised to two stories and extensively remodeled. A two-story gallery across the rear of the house was enclosed for rooms, and other rooms were built onto the rear of the west wing. This remodeling was undertaken in order to convert the building into an apartment house.

The central portion of the Preston House consists of two rooms separated by a central passage, the west room and passage being the earliest portion. The chimney here has a full-height chimney breast, now removed and in storage, and to the right of it, an arched opening once provided access to a closet but now serves as the entrance to the west wing. This opening is flanked by pilasters and has a molded architrave and key-stone. A modillion-and-dentil cornice remains in place, as does the flush wainscoting which encircles the room. Sections of the wall stripped of plaster reveal that this portion of the house is supported on massive L-shaped corner posts.

The passage has been divided into a small entrance vestibule and a larger stair hall by a twentieth-century partition. It also is decorated with flush wainscoting and has a closed-string, L-plan stair with a square newel, molded rail, and turned balusters.

The east room of the central block was added early in the nineteenth century. It is encircled by a pedestal-type chair rail. A twentieth-century Georgian Revival stair with an open string, turned balusters, and a paneled newel, added when the building was divided into apartments, rises in the southwest corner of the room. One early nine-light sash remains in place.

The mid-nineteenth-century wings are absolutely plain, with no decoration of any sort. The easternmost room has been stripped to its frame. Of interest here are the diagonal

(See continuation sheet #1)

[S]IGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE - CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES circa 1795, 19th c. BUILDER/ARCHITECT Francis Irby, builder; Jesse Dungan, mason

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Preston House is the principal historic landmark of the southwestern Virginia town of Saltville. Situated on a knoll with a commanding view of the community, the house is reported to be the first frame dwelling erected in the town and stands as an unusually fine specimen of Early Republican building for its time and place. Historically, the house is associated with the Preston and Campbell families, prominent names in the early history of the region.

The land upon which the Preston House stands was a part of a 330-acre tract originally granted to Colonel Charles Campbell in 1753. It descended ultimately to his granddaughter Sarah Buchanan Campbell, daughter of General William Campbell, commander of the Continental troops at the 1780 Battle of King's Mountain, and of Elizabeth Henry, the sister of Patrick Henry. During Sarah's minority, the property was managed for her by her guardian Thomas Madison, a relative of the future president. Madison opened a small salt works for her benefit and built a log house on the property, both around 1790. This log building was believed to have been incorporated into the present house, but the recent partial disassembly of the building has disproved the notion.

Sarah B. Campbell married Francis Preston (1765-1835), son of William Preston, an early explorer of Southwest Virginia, in 1793. Preston had been a law student of George Wythe and, in the year of his marriage, was elected to his first of two consecutive terms in the U. S. House of Representatives. He served as a colonel in the War of 1812 and later became a general in the militia. In later life, after having moved from "the Salt-works," as Saltville was then known, Preston served several terms in both houses of the Virginia General Assembly.

It was in 1795, during his residence at the Salt-works and his term in Congress, that Preston built the earliest section of the Preston House. Francis Irby is remembered as the carpenter, and Jesse Dungan as the stone mason. A slave named Cyrus is recorded as having made the wrought nails used in the house.

Two noteworthy incidents occurred during Preston's tenure. The first was the discovery, during the digging of a well in the front yard around 1793, of a number of mastodon bones. Such bones continued to be unearthed in the area throughout the nineteenth century. The second was the visit, in 1808, of James Madison, then Democratic-Republican candidate for President of the United States.

The Prestons controlled large portions of the salt-producing lands from which the town derived its name and principal livelihood. They operated the works themselves at times, and sometimes leased the rights to other persons, men such as William King or Colonel James White, who were among the operators in the early nineteenth century. The family took over the works again in 1829 and operated them until 1862, when Thomas L. Preston, (See continuation sheet #2)

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gillespie, Loretta, "Preston House Being Torn Down," Saltville Progress, Saltville, Va., January 21, 1976.

"Please Stop!," editorial, Saltville Progress, Saltville, Va., January 21, 1976.

Preston, Thomas L. Historical Sketches and Reminiscences of an Octogenarian. Richmond, 1900.

"Saltville Receives Option on House," Bristol Herald Courier, Bristol, Va., March 7, 1976.

Tour Guide to Historic Saltville n.p., n.d. (in VHLG files) (See continuation sheet #2)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ONE ACRE

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 432100 4080620

ZONE EASTING

NORTHING

B

ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

C

D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

April, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

804-786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Julius R. Fishburne, Jr., Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

APR 20 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION

exterior sheathing and subflooring, installed when the wing was rebuilt, and the use of beaded weatherboards as interior sheathing and as a base for lath.

No early outbuildings remain.

DTU

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

SIGNIFICANCE

the last of the family to own the property, sold the house and the works and left the village.

From 1862-1903, George W. Palmer owned the Preston House. In the twentieth century, it has had several owners and has served primarily as apartments. Demolition of the house by the present owner, James A. Hatfield, was begun in January, 1976, but local interest resulted in arrangements being made for its preservation and ultimate rehabilitation.

DTU

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.

Wilson, Goodridge, "Saltville's Madison House Has Historic Background," Roanoke Times, Roanoke, Va., June 26, 1976.

ATES
Y AUTHORITY
DIVISION

VIRGINIA
GLADE SPRING QUADRANGLE
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

1067 (S.W.)
(Bromfield 1:50,000)

